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PENCE ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR REPUBLICAN LEADER

"We will move forward with a renewed commitment to our core values and principles."

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence (R-IN) today formally announced his campaign for Republican Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives. In a letter to his colleagues, Pence explained his platform and sought their guidance, advice and counsel.

Excerpts from Congressman Pence's letter to his colleagues follows (full dear colleague attached):

"I am running for Republican leader because we didn't just lose our majority, I believe we lost our way...."

"Our opponents will say that the American people rejected our Republican vision. I say the American people didn't quit on the Contract with America, we did. And in so doing, we severed the bonds of trust between our party and millions of our most ardent supporters...."

"Only by making a dramatic turn in the direction of the agenda of the Republican Revolution can we hope to attain majority status again..... We must again embrace the notion the Republicans seek power not simply to govern but change government. We are the agents of change and we must return to that reformist vision...."

"I believe we must confront this moment with new leadership and new voices. We must take a page from the playbook of President Ronald Reagan who taught us that it is not enough to believe great things, we must effectively communicate great things to the American people..."

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Dear Republican Colleague,

I am writing to announce my candidacy for Republican Leader in the 110th Congress and to ask for your support. I will make every effort to speak with you about this personally before our leadership elections, and I am anxious to hear your thoughts and counsel.

Like all of you, I was deeply disappointed with the outcome of Election Day 2006. I am saddened to think of the men and women who will leave our ranks and cannot reflect on the names without emotion or ask, as Gideon did in defeat, "why has all this happened to us?"

I urge you to consider this specific question as we return to the Capitol to choose the men and women who will lead us back to the Majority. I look forward to your analysis but, as Sen. Phil Gramm once said, "I've got an open mind, but not an empty mind." Here is my take.

I am running for Republican leader, because I believe that we did not just lose our Majority-we lost our way. We are in the wilderness because we walked away from the limited government principles that minted the Republican Congress. But there is a way out. "The way out of the wilderness," author Mark Helprin wrote, "is the truth; recognizing it, stating it, defending it, living by it." Here is the truth as I see it.

The Truth:

After 1994, we were a Majority committed to a balanced federal budget, entitlement reform and the principles of a limited federal government. We delivered on balanced federal budgets, welfare reform and responded to a national emergency with defense spending, homeland security and tax cuts that put our economy back on its feet.

However, in recent years, to the chagrin of millions of Republicans, our Majority also voted to expand the federal government's role in education by nearly 100% and created the largest new entitlement in 40 years. We also pursued domestic spending policies that created record deficits, national debt and earmark spending that has embarrassed us and caused many Americans to question our commitment to fiscal responsibility.

This was not in the Contract with America.

Our opponents will say that the American people rejected our Republican vision. I say the American people did not quit on the Contract with America, we did. In so doing, we severed the bonds of trust between our party and millions of our most ardent supporters.

As we choose who will lead us in the days ahead, it is essential that we learn from the lessons of 2006. It is more important that we move forward with a renewed commitment to our principles and the vigor to do our duty.

Our mission has now changed. Our mission in the Majority was to pass legislation reflecting Republican principles. The duty of the Republican Minority in the 110th Congress is to defeat the liberal agenda of the Democrat Party and become the majority in Congress again. We will only defeat the Democrat agenda by

presenting a positive, conservative message in vivid contrast to the big government liberalism of the new Majority.

New Vision:

To renew our Majority, we must offer this nation a compelling vision of fiscal discipline and reform. It is written "without a vision, the people perish." What is true of a people is also true of any political movement. Our new Republican minority must rededicate itself to the ideals and standards that minted our majority in 1994. Only by renewing the promises of the Republican Revolution will we attain Majority status again. Now, as then, we must pledge ourselves to promote and defend the agenda the American people elect Republicans to advance; defend our nation, our treasury and our values. We must again embrace the notion that Republicans seek the Majority not simply to govern but to change government for the better. We are the agents of change and we must return to that reformist vision.

New Voices:

I have great respect and appreciation for the hard work and leadership provided by our current leadership. Like most members of our conference, I have stood behind our leaders through good times and challenging times. However, in this new time of challenge also comes opportunity. I believe we must confront this moment with new leadership and new voices. We must take a page from the playbook of President Ronald Reagan who taught us that it is not enough to believe great things, we must effectively communicate great things to the American people.

In various roles, over the past six years, I have worked to provide a credible and persuasive voice for the Reagan agenda. Credibility will be essential for our primary task these next two years-to expose, dismantle and defeat the Democrat agenda. Without the votes necessary to stop the advance of their liberal priorities, our mission will be one of persuasion and tactics. Each of us must commit ourselves to using our voices and areas of expertise to dismantle Democrat arguments and expose their liberal, big government agenda at every turn. I see every Republican member as a leader, with unique gifts and talents, and I am asking for the privilege of serving this team of leaders.

These are anxious times, and we all feel the pain of opportunity lost. I encourage you to act without fear or inhibition, to be bold in your choices, and return this conference to the ideals and standards that created our national governing Majority. To retake our Majority, we must "be strong and courageous and do the work." We must renew our commitment to the agenda of the Majority of the American people, and defend our nation, our treasury and our values for ourselves and our posterity.

I am ready to work with you to restore and renew the Republican Congress. I ask for your support to serve you as Republican Leader in the 110th Congress.

Most sincerely,

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Rep. Mike Pence